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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/45/849/Add.5)]

45/207. Food and agricultural problems 1/

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, contained in the annex to its resolution S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, contained in the annex to its resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990,

Recalling also its resolutions on food and agricultural problems, in particular resolutions 41/191 of 8 December 1986 and 43/191 of 20 December 1988, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/88 of 26 July 1989 on food and agriculture,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted by the World Food Conference, 2/

Stressing the imperative need to keep food and agricultural issues at the centre of global attention, and their role in the reactivation of development, as was pointed out in the section on agriculture of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade,

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1/ The term "agriculture" and its derivatives include fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products. See Basic texts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, vols. I and II, 1989 edition.

2/ Report of the World Food Conference, Rome, 5-16 November 1974 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.75.II.A.3), chap. I.

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Reaffirming that food and agricultural problems in developing countries should be considered in a comprehensive manner in their different dimensions and in their immediate, short-term and long-term perspectives, taking into account the interaction of agricultural development with, inter alia, the external economic environment, policies for agricultural growth, human resources development, rural development policies and the links between natural resources, environment, population growth trends and sustainable agriculture,

Emphasizing that the continuing gravity of the economic situation in many developing countries, including the persistence of negative trends in the food production and agricultural sectors, requires, in many cases, urgent and decisive action at the national and international levels to support and ensure their full economic recovery and development,

Stressing the need for continued and additional support from the international donor community for agricultural development in developing countries, as well as the need for increased efforts and investment on the part of the developing countries in the development of their own food and agricultural sectors,

Noting with concern that the tensions concerning international trade in agricultural markets remain serious, notably owing to the persistence of all types of trade-distorting agricultural support, covering internal régimes, market access, export subsidies and sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations in many developed countries,

Stressing that the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, launched during the Special Session of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, held at Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 15 to 20 September 1986, presents a unique opportunity to develop a more open, viable and durable trading system, and stressing also the importance of overcoming obstacles in the negotiations and arriving at a successful, balanced and comprehensive conclusion of the Round,

Emphasizing that the long-term objective of the negotiations on agriculture is to establish a fair, market-oriented agricultural trading system and that a reform process should be initiated through the negotiation of commitments on support and protection and through the establishment of strengthened and more operationally effective rules and disciplines of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade,

Concerned that the economies of most developing countries continue to suffer because, inter alia, of the long-term adverse trends in international commodity prices, protectionism and worsening terms of trade, a growing debt-service burden and the trends in the transfer of resources to and from developing countries, which have had a negative effect on international trade and agriculture, particularly for developing countries,

Reaffirming that the right to food is a universal human right that should be guaranteed to all people and, in that context, believing in the general principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political pressure, either at the national or at the international level,

Welcoming the ongoing work of the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture in monitoring the world food situation and in alerting the international community to impending problems,

Noting with alarm that the screw-worm fly has been introduced into North Africa and is now established, thereby posing a potential threat to people, livestock and wildlife in Africa, the Mediterranean parts of Europe and the Near East,

Welcoming the efforts made by the countries affected and the international community to contain locust and grasshopper infestations through the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/203 of 20 December 1988 on the international strategy for the fight against locust and grasshopper infestation, particularly in Africa,

Welcoming the decision of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its twenty-fifth session to reinforce the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, 3/ with a view to enhancing the protection of health and the environment, and noting the co-operation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme in that regard,

Noting with particular concern that hunger and malnutrition have been increasing since the World Food Conference was held in 1974, that the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition increased in the 1980s and that only limited progress has been made towards the central objective of the Conference,

1. Welcomes the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its sixteenth ministerial session, held at Bangkok from 21 to 24 May 1990, 4/ in particular the pragmatic action recommended for meeting the growing challenges to fight hunger and malnutrition in the 1990s, and calls upon Governments and international and non-governmental organizations fully to assist the World Food Council in implementing the recommendations;

2. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on trends in the international market for agricultural and tropical products and the liberalization of international agricultural trade; 5/

3/ See Report of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Twenty-fifth Session, Rome, 11-29 November 1989 (C 89/REP), paras. 110-120.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/45/19), part one.

5/ A/45/583.

3. Stresses the urgent need for substantial progress in stimulating food production and productivity in developing countries and the importance of increasing domestic food production, thereby stimulating national economic growth and social progress in those countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries, and helping to resolve the problems of hunger and malnutrition effectively;

4. Affirms that increasing food production and improving access to food by low-income people in developing countries will significantly contribute to the eradication of poverty and the elimination of malnutrition, and recommends that higher priority be given to supporting food production and to developing a marketing infrastructure and income/employment generation in the national development efforts of those countries in order to ensure adequate food supplies and equitable distribution of food;

5. Stresses that it is important for developing countries to create a basis for more rapid industrialization and diversification of their economic structure with a view to increasing their food and agricultural production, and, in that context, stresses the importance of finance for investment in the agriculture sector, which should form part of national policies and programmes for international co-operation, both bilateral and multilateral;

6. Also stresses the importance of science and technology in the development of agriculture, in the increase of food production and in the modernization of agriculture, and, in that context, calls upon the international community to support scientific and technological training and research in developing countries in order to promote sustainable agricultural development in those countries, and emphasizes the urgency of strengthening international co-operation in the field of transfer of environmentally sound agricultural technologies and of facilitating the free exchange of information on experience and technology relating to food production, processing and storage, taking into account the need for developing countries to have assured non-discriminatory access to advances in such fields as biotechnology and genetic engineering, at appropriate cost;

7. Urges the members of the international community to take further determined action in support of the efforts of developing countries by increasing even more the flow of resources, including concessional flows designated for agricultural development, and by increasing food aid commitments in support of the strengthened efforts of developing countries to increase mobilization and allocation of domestic resources to address food and agricultural problems, in addition to the flow of resources from developed countries, bearing in mind the need to channel this assistance through appropriate existing organizations and programmes;

8. Stresses that the provision of food aid in the context of emergency and natural disaster situations should be reinforced through additional rehabilitation and development assistance in order to help restore food production capacity and self-reliance and that it should be provided with a view to restoring such capacity;

9. Calls for a joint effort by all States and appropriate international and intergovernmental organizations to improve the food situation and enhance the nutritional levels of affected groups, in particular low-income groups, especially during the implementation of structural adjustment programmes;

10. Stresses that the outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations should present a unique opportunity to develop a more open, viable and durable trading system, to reverse the disquieting rise in protectionism through a progressive and substantial reduction of support and protection measures in order to avoid inflicting large losses on the more efficient producers, especially in developing countries, and to bring agriculture under the strengthened and operationally effective rules and disciplines of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, fully in accordance with the Ministerial Declaration on the Uruguay Round 6/ and the Mid-Term Review Agreements, 7/ and stresses that efforts to that end should take into account the need to provide special and differential treatment for developing countries, bearing in mind their food security objectives and the need for agricultural and rural development, and should also take into account the need to give effect to the Mid-Term Review Agreements, in which it was stated that ways should be developed to take into account the possible negative effects of the reform process on net food-importing developing countries;

11. Also stresses the need to implement promptly and fully the relevant provisions of the Ministerial Declaration and the Mid-Term Review Agreements concerning tropical products, including processed and semi-processed tropical products;

12. Further stresses the need to improve global economic conditions in order to establish food security in developing countries at the national, subregional, regional and global levels;

13. Calls upon the international community to support and complement, through specific and effective measures, the efforts made by Governments of African States to stimulate agriculture and food production and to implement fully the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986;

14. Urges all States members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to assist the organization to fulfil its leading role in the United Nations system in assisting countries in their agricultural and rural development;

15. Appeals to the international community to contribute generously to the World Food Programme so that the pledging target for the period 1991-1992, as set

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6/ See GATT, Focus Newsletter, No. 41, October 1986.

7/ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT Activities 1988 (Sales No. GATT/1989-2), annex I.

out in General Assembly resolution 44/230 of 22 December 1989, can be attained and the Programme can continue its activity in support of development and in meeting emergency food needs;

16. Welcomes the conclusion of the arrangements for the third replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, calls upon the international community to continue supporting the activities of the Fund in favour of agricultural development in developing countries, takes note with satisfaction of the positive contribution made by the Fund to the economic recovery programmes of its member developing countries and its increased assistance to the African region in conformity with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, particularly through its Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification, and invites donors to endorse resolution 60/XIII of 25 January 1990 of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, 8/ concerning the possibility of additional voluntary contributions to the Special Resources for Sub-Saharan Africa for a further three years, starting in January 1991, without prejudicing deliberations on the mobilization of core funding for the Fund;

17. Stresses the need for continued and co-ordinated international action to tackle the long-term problems of migratory pest control and food-related diseases in developing countries, and calls upon donors to continue to give high priority to the implementation and continued co-ordination by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and by other relevant programmes, of emergency control programmes, as well as medium-term and longer-term measures, against grasshoppers and locusts, including regional preventive programmes on the desert locust and research on sustainable control strategies formulated and financed in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and to remain prepared to provide financial and technical assistance to affected countries at short notice;

18. Urges the international community to give full support to action to eradicate the screw-worm fly, particularly in Africa, welcomes the support already provided by donors to the collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development on the eradication programme and calls upon them to give high priority to the implementation of the international emergency eradication programme in Africa, co-ordinated by the Screw-worm Emergency Centre for North Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in co-operation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development;

19. Notes the decision of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization jointly to convene an International Conference on Nutrition in 1992, stresses the need for the Conference to focus

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8/ International Fund for Agricultural Development, Governing Council, Thirteenth Session Report, Rome, 23-25 January 1990, para. 15.

on specific rules and practical action and calls upon the international community to support that effort fully as a basis for concerted national and international action to tackle the problems of malnutrition, undernutrition and specific nutrition-related diseases and conditions in the 1990s;

20. Calls upon the international community to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September 1990, 9/ and, in particular, to support the efforts of those countries in the areas of food production and rural development, food security, development and management of fishery and forestry resources, environmental protection and sustainable development;

21. Emphasizes the need for further efforts to be made to achieve the four broad hunger-alleviation goals contained in the Cairo Declaration, adopted by the World Food Council at its fifteenth session, 10/ namely:

(a) The elimination of starvation and death caused by famine;

(b) A substantial reduction in malnutrition and mortality among young children;

(c) A tangible reduction in chronic hunger;

(d) The elimination of major nutritional-deficiency diseases;

22. Urges the World Food Council, as decided at its sixteenth ministerial session, within its mandate, to improve co-ordination of national and international action towards a more concerted attack on hunger and to examine the food production challenges facing different regions of the developing world in the 1990s, 11/ and also urges it to continue sensitizing the international community to the nature, causes and consequences of hunger and malnutrition and to continue recommending appropriate practical policies for remedial action;

23. Calls upon the developing countries, in addressing food problems, to promote international co-operation within the context of their primary responsibility for promoting technical co-operation among themselves in food and agriculture, to place greater emphasis on their technical co-operation in that sector, requests developed countries and the United Nations system to assist and support such activities and, in addition, requests the United Nations to play a

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9/ See A/CONF.147/Misc.9.

10/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/44/19), part one.

11/ Ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/45/19), part one, paras. 15-22 and 27-29.

prominent role as promoter and catalyst of international co-operation and technical co-operation among developing countries in food and agriculture;

24. Decides to change the title of the sub-item "Food problems" to "Food and agricultural development" in the agenda of future sessions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;

25. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the World Food Council, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to submit to the Economic and Social Council, at its second regular session of 1991, an updated comprehensive report on trends in the international market for agricultural and tropical products, on developments in the liberalization of international trade in agricultural and tropical products, taking into account the share of developing countries in such trade and the possible adverse short-term effects on net-food-importing developing countries, and on the follow-up to the section on agriculture of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

71st plenary meeting
21 December 1990